



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

pleted is a literal reprint of that of 1823. The last volume is a General Index, so copious and minute as to answer every possible purpose and need of reference. The volumes of the reprint are uniform in size and form with those of the British Poets by the same publishers, reviewed in our last number. In mechanical execution they leave nothing to be desired. An enterprise more worthy of their national reputation the publishers could not have undertaken. We trust that they have not been deceived in the receptivity of their public. These works, the flower of the best English literature for a century, merit a place in every library. They have borne a large office in the culture of mind and style for past generations, and for our elders now upon the stage; and we can wish for those entering active or literary life access to no purer, or more copious, or more stimulating fountains of thought, sentiment, and motive, than are here opened.

-
- ART. XI.—1. MICHELET: *La Ligue et Henri IV.* Paris.
1 vol. 8vo.
2. JULES JANIN: *Histoire de la Littérature Dramatique.* 4 vols.
18mo.
3. JULES JANIN: *Les Petits Bonheurs.* 1 vol. Post 8vo.
4. DR. VÉRON: “*Quatre Ans de Règne, où en sommes nous?*”
1 vol. 8vo.
5. MARÉCHAL DE RAGUSE: *Mémoires de 1792 à 1837.*

THERE may be a doubt whether Michelet ought to rank among the historians of France; for, if judged by the hitherto admitted rules of historical composition, he is anything but a writer of history or a chronicler of events. His business is with ideas, and those ideas his own; and, meanwhile, he is possessed by the conviction that never was man so entirely a slave to facts. To those who have studied the man and read the author, a more curious subject for philosophic contemplation cannot be conceived. Whatever Michelet imagines him-

self most assuredly to be, is, you may be certain, precisely that which he is in reality the least. He believes himself to be absolutely and exclusively an historian, whereas he is really a rhapsodist; he fancies he is above all impartial, whilst he is in truth bound hand and foot and utterly given over to the extremest prejudice. He affirms that truth is his only passion and only aim, instead of which the reality is, that he has such an insurmountable aversion for truth, that he invariably refuses to recognize it wherever it may come before his eyes. He believes himself true, because for no consideration in the world would he disguise what *he sees* as truth; but his senses bear false witness, and his vision is perpetually asquint. There is in the modern literature of France another name which for many common qualities and defects may be placed close beside Michelet's;—we allude to Victor Hugo. Both are intensely though unconsciously mendacious, and both are equally persuaded of their entire subserviency to truth. Not only have both a warped judgment and eyes aslant, but the peculiar crookedness of both is nearly the same. What has, however, given his superiority to Victor Hugo, is his spontaneous, inevitable choice of the means given him by nature for entering into communication with the public. Hugo was born a poet, and this he never attempted to gainsay. Thus far his intellectual distortion has borne only upon the matter of what he writes, never upon the manner of it. He may sing what is unfitting to his voice, but the voice is there, and he sings. About this there can be no error; whilst with Michelet, on the contrary, the case stands widely otherwise. He resembles a musician who, by some unaccountable mistake, should only have studied painting, or, *vice versa*, whilst colors only are in his hand, he is in his head combining sounds, and his ear, not his eye, is interested in his painting. Conceive Beethoven forced to bring out the Pastoral Symphony upon canvas. This is precisely Michelet's position. He is required to live, to be, and to create, in an element that is not his; to translate the really prodigious eloquence with which he is swelling into a tongue he is unable to master. He is like a man who was never able to learn a language, and who therefore has never found

the right expression for what is in him. One thing may be absolutely affirmed, and that is, that never was a man more unfit for writing history, or for writing prose, than is Michelet. Perhaps he may be a poet, but then his means of expression are inadequate to what he has to express. After studying all his works, one cannot avoid thinking that his thoughts have never yet found their real form,—the form that is theirs by nature. This it is which makes Michelet so difficult to read. You feel that he is not necessarily *one* with his subject or with himself; he is full of other qualities than those you would ask from the prose-writer and the historian. He is all imagination and all color, an admirable artist, but, as we said before, certainly not a chronicler of facts. If, instead of writing history, Michelet wrote historical romances, he would far outshine Walter Scott. Two or three sentences at the close of his history of the *Ligue* are not to be left unnoticed, for they too clearly show the preoccupations, the “warps,” of the man :—

“This history is, I declare, not written impartially. Its pages keep no even balance between good and evil. Quite the reverse, it is a partial history, wholly, vigorously, and unscrupulously for the right against the wrong; for the right and for the true. If one line is to be found wherein the writer has falsified, no matter what, out of respect for this opinion or that influence, he will consent to erase the whole.”

Now, if, on opening the book, the innocent, ignorant reader lights upon this passage, he naturally says to himself, “What a treasure have I fallen upon!” and applauds himself for having purchased a work so divested of all party spirit, so free from a bias of any description. But here is the misfortune: this reader must, if he desires not to alter his opinion, never consult any other historian save Michelet alone; for if he does, he will soon be so sorely perplexed that he may end by throwing all historical science to the dogs. It is curious to observe upon what basis Michelet, in his own mind, rests his claims to the unswerving delineation of truth.

“I do not mean to pretend that no history save my own is sincerely written; but I say that, save and except myself, all writers, even the

most honorable, have preserved the respect of certain things and certain men, whilst, on the contrary, history, the judge of the universe, has for its first and paramount duty the absence of all respect."

If such things did not lie in black and white under our eyes, we should declare their existence impossible, and refuse to believe that in a country like France a man could be found out of Charenton to put forth as a principle, that the sincerity of history is dependent upon what would preclude the possibility of any history containing a moral lesson,— upon systematic "disrespect."

As might be guessed, this professed disrespect applies only to the "certain things and certain men" M. Michelet does not like, whilst for those whose peculiarities suit his own he is full of one-sided admiration and excessive respect. For instance, while he can find no saving clause in the character of any one of the men attached to the Catholic movement, while he can neither understand the unity they represent nor the popularity they excite, he is mentally upon his knees before Rabelais, in whom he seems to find impersonated whatever is great and glorious in the time. "*Le bon et grand Rabelais!*" he exclaims with enthusiasm; and you see that, here, the writer whose merit (but whose only one) was, that, like his precursor, Chaucer, in England, he helped to form and establish the edifice of his native language, meets, on M. Michelet's part, with a sympathy and a faculty of comprehension that fails to be awakened in him by any man whose sphere is that of statesmanship. M. Michelet judges of the actors of that dramatic period, the sixteenth century, in France, precisely as a critic might judge of actors on the stage. The political sense is completely wanting in him. Of his works may be said, what was once said of M. le Rémusat, when he wrote in the *Globe*: "Il fait le feuilleton de la philosophie." M. Michelet writes the *feuilleton* of French history. But if from the subject you pass to the execution, the praise that cannot be awarded to the annalist must be sometimes largely given to the word-painter. There are now and then pages that absolutely dazzle you; bursts of rude eloquence that carry you away; pictures, the intense coloring of which may rival Rembrandt, Rubens, or Murillo. Here and there, too, a character

strikes him forcibly; and not happening to excite his active dislike, but leaving him free to exercise whatever judgment nature originally endowed him with, he rapidly and broadly dashes off a sketch that, while it charms the graphic, does not egregiously offend the philosophic sense. His picture of Henri IV. is eminently an example of this. If the *voleur* husband of "la Reine Margot" had not been a prince, M. Michelet would so utterly give himself up to his admiration for him that he would be untrue from over-praise; if Henri IV., being a prince, had always been a Catholic, M. Michelet would be so blind to his virtues, that his portrait would be false from over-blame; but as there is in the birth of Henri IV. what counterbalances any leaning M. Michelet may have towards him, so in Henri IV.'s want of all religious conviction, in his readiness to be of any creed, there is, for M. Michelet's strong atheistic tendency, that which counterbalances his birth and his royalty. The result is one rarely attained by our author's impartiality; and adding to this impartiality the brilliancy and originality of style which seldom deserts him, his portrait of Henri IV. is worth quoting.

"Great military tacticians (foreigners especially) have undervalued Henri IV. because they have not taken into account that, in France, whatever is, is in virtue of the latent fire it contains (*tout est par l'étincelle*). No one ever had more of this than Henri IV. A greater captain would have succeeded less. His vivacity, carrying everything before it, made him first strong as a partisan long before he became a general. He perhaps did not know much of the command of an army, but he created armies by his own personal charm, by his gayety, by the glance of his eye. Everything was ascribed to Henri IV. Each ruin that society rebuilt, he was said to have re-edified; he did all, restored all, invented all,—he alone, and France nothing! Such is the legendary justice, the sterile idolatry, which sees miracles on every side, and attributes everything to chance and the hazards of Providence!

"This beloved of Fortune, who above all was indebted to her for having been in the beginning so rudely tried, had also the luck of being born in the midst of the ardent fire of Protestantism. He was the instrument of the party. Coligny found him at La Rochelle, and took the little mountain prince as a chief: the Gascon was up to anything (*il ne doutait de rien*). Coligny, however, was not deceived; he

saw at once the unsafe side of the royal lad, and at Moncontour kept him in the background, in order that the little Protestant army should not be suddenly transformed into an army of courtiers only. The day was lost : Henri remained a resource, and he took care to say the day would have been gained had he been allowed to have his own way. Coligny took him to himself, taught him patience and virtue? No! the creature was a strange one ; firm and steady as a soldier, for all the rest changeable as water, false as the wave.

“ We will lay hands upon this Proteus.

“ He was grand-nephew to the greatest braggart of all France and of Navarre,—Francis I. He was grandson to that charming Margaret of Navarre, so uncertain in her mysticism that she never rightly knew whether she was Protestant or Catholic.

“ His grandfather, Henri d’Albret, who assuredly read *Gargantua* (published in 1534), enacted over again at the child’s birth (in 1553) the exact Rabelaisian tale. It was he who gave him Jurançon wine to drink, and to please this same grandsire, the mother, Jeanne d’Albret, had, during her labor pains, a Bearnese *cantique* chanted to Our Lady of Jurançon !

“ Henri’s preceptor swears that at the sole smell of the garlic-dose the infant nodded its head, whilst the grandfather, overjoyed, cried aloud, ‘Thou wilt be a genuine Bearnese at all events!’ Of a truth, too, everything was done to make him this. He never learned to write, which is probably the very reason why he wrote so well. His least letter is a gem.

“ His education, nevertheless, was a robust one. He learned everything verbally, and Latin by habit, and as his own tongue. His chief duty was seemingly to be for ever out of doors, scouring the country, fighting all the boys of his own age. ‘When the king of Navarre,’ says D’Aubigné, ‘had tired out horses and men, and thrown over every one, panting from fatigue, then he got up a dance (*il forçait une danse*) ; but he alone then was capable of dancing.’

“ Locomotion is the law of the man. He is for ever on the move. Long-winded writings, indited by Forget or Mornay, have been attributed to him ;—he never wrote them ; he had no patience, no wind. He never wrote save briefly ;—he wrote orders to his officers, or love-letters,—nothing more.

“ Now let us condense our estimate.

“ First, Henry IV. was in every sense a *man*. Secondly, he was a *Frenchman*, exceedingly like his grand-uncle, Francis I., but more affable, more easily familiar with all sorts of people. Thirdly, he was a *Gascon*, with the peculiar sharpness of wit and humor that individuals

of this race add to the purely French wit (*Il avait extrêmement le gout du terroir, et dégasconna lentement*). What he kept the longest was his habit of joking, his temperance and his avarice being always sure to find a witticism that should stand him in lieu of payment in bare coin.

“ Tradition gives him eight nurses ; he was therefore fed from the milk of eight different constitutions and tempers. This agrees perfectly with the rest of his life, that was always subject to different influences. But Coligny and Catherine de' Medici were also among his nurses. Unhappily, he took little from the first, and an infinite deal from the last. He did not take her cold cruelty, but he took her profound indifference to all things.

“ What deceived the most in Henri IV.* was his sensibility, quite real and in no way put on ; a sensibility easy and inborn, springing from nature. He had eyes brilliant and sharp, but very kind, and used to moisten at each moment, — the most singular readiness of tears. He could weep for everything ; he wept from love, from friendship, from pity, and was none the more reliable for that. No matter ; there was about him an exterior air of goodness that made him quickly beloved.”

To this *moral* portrait, M. Michelet adds the physical portrait of Henri IV. in these few words :—

“ With his white plume on his head, and on his back his red cloak, scarce big enough to cover his doublet worn by the cuirass, and his hose of a rusty brown, he was not difficult to discover. Short, sturdy, his beard somewhat mixed with premature threads of gray, his countenance energetic, with a profile where the nose and chin sought to meet, Henri was the picture of the true and perfect Gascon soldier.”

Whether this portrait be not more in the style of a romancer or a dramatist than of an historian, we leave our readers to decide ; but it is one of the portraits of Henry IV. that best reproduce the man as he really was, that best make him live before our eyes. In the same style is also the chapter touching the king's affection for Gabrielle d'Estrées, and a more charming passage of romance or of poetry in prose has rarely been penned. Upon the whole, this new volume of M. Michelet's, failing completely of the purpose for which it has been published, is in another sense a decided acquisition to the modern literature of France. As to any serious information upon the *Ligue*, as to any political instruction, it contains

* We particularly recommend this passage, for it contains more truth than is to be found in any sketch of this same prince, who was not so much a comedian as a Prometheus. “ Not false, but fickle,” as Lord Byron has expressed it.

none ; but as a picture, conveying a lively and correct impression of the social state of France in the sixteenth century, it is a very valuable production.

For giving the general color of an epoch, for marking out the leading features of a particular period of civilization, few books can be more successful than Jules Janin's four volumes, professedly purposing to treat of the History of Dramatic Literature in France, but in reality treating of French society between 1823 and 1851. Janin's book is a magic lantern, as was, and is still, his Monday's *feuilleton* in the *Journal des Débats* ; everybody and everything passes by turns, front-face or side-face, and you catch a sight of every celebrity, whether native or foreign, that has reflected its image in the current of Parisian popularity during the last five-and-twenty years. They are all there, from Corcelet, the vender of comestibles, up to Guizot and Casimir Périer ; from the Duchess of Sutherland down to Madame Provost, the famous *bouquetière* of the Palais Royal. If this kaleidoscope-like system gave to Janin's *feuilletons* their special charm, their superiority over all others, how much more must it adapt itself to the composition of a book in which each *feuilleton* forms a separate chapter in a literary whole, whereof the object is to furnish the reader with a general view of Parisian civilization, *à propos* to a minute and particular view of the productions of the Parisian stage !

It is scarcely possible to divide the literature of France from her society and her manners. Each is at once both the cause and the effect of the other, and a stranger may, on coming to the modern Babylon, know pretty well, by three or four visits to the principal theatres, and by attending to the attitude of the spectators on such occasions, which way blows the wind of Parisian morality or immorality. For instance, it is not difficult to see that between Victor Hugo and young Dumas (the son) a radical revolution has taken place, and that the public which wept over the woes of Marion Delorme, and the public that applauds Olivier de Jalin's castigation of equivocal ladies in the *Demi Monde*, is either composed of different individuals, or of the same persons transformed by circumstances. From 1827-8 to 1835-6, the current set against all limits, all barriers, all restraints, and whatever was *not* law-

ful was dignified as heroic. The merit was to overthrow, to outstep,—it was an aggressive merit. When this had borne its most detestable fruits,—detestable in every way, in art to the full as much as in politics or in morals,—then the current turned, and set in precisely the contrary direction. M. Guizot's sentence became the watchword,—“The only progress now possible is resistance.” Within the last ten or twelve years, above all, this latter tendency has been more than ever evident, and a preaching tone has been gradually growing fashionable in France, throughout the domains of society, of politics, and of the arts. Janin's History of Dramatic Literature is especially curious to those of our generation who have a knowledge of the so-called *periode échevelée* only from tradition, and it is with deep interest that we follow him through his descriptions of what took place in the years immediately preceding and immediately following 1830. We will seize his sentiment upon the subject, for it entirely coincides with our own, and show the reader how he judges the first symptoms of what in 1827 was necessarily called the “new school.”

“There is a genuine charm about these studies, which, after all, constituted the life and the marvel of our days of early youth. I may wish to advance, to speak at last of the drama of the *present* time, but I am held back; and in truth what hurry is there? Why should I not recur once again to Shakespeare?

“Shakespeare was the starting-point of the entire *new school*. He was the first master of Hugo; he reigned over all our stage, and that alone would be a reason for recurring to him. Othello filled the Théâtre Français with Mlle. Mars; the second Théâtre Français was full with Miss Smithson in Lady Macbeth; Kean and the Merchant of Venice were at the Théâtre Italien. Shakespeare was everywhere: at the Grand Opera, at the Porte St. Martin, and even at the Ambigu. For a time he inspired with a passion for his genius the noblest minds we have, and the commonest characters; princes and subjects, grisettes and duchesses, were all alike inflamed. One day, above all, the great poet achieved a triumph that stands perhaps alone in literary history; it was a triumph achieved in his own tongue, and with his own natural interpreters.

“This was in the year 1827, (O prodigal time! so full of hopes, inspirations, and good things of all kinds!) on one of those nights when

wind and rain drive the unoccupied crowd to the various theatres. The Théâtre Italien shone with all its accustomed splendors. Into her habitual box had just entered, in the midst of the acclamations of all around, the protectress of the *Gymnase* and of M. Scribe,—both just beginning to be,—Madame the Duchesse de Berry! Everywhere, on all sides, lights, flowers, and *beauties*. In corners of the house, had you looked for them patiently, the romancers and poets of the barely budding time, for whom fortune and the *right moment* were lying in wait,—M. Hugo, M. de Balzac, M. de Vigny, M. Frédéric Soulié, etc. O vision of the past! they were all there then. And in the rush of duchesses was one woman, ardent of soul, uncertain of aim, and whose name was Marie Dorval! She had come to listen, and so had also the man by her side, who was one day to be Frédéric Lemaitre! And all these infant poets and embryo comedians, and these critics of barely twenty years, they were all called together to the same intellectual banquet, by the same intellectual passions; they were all assembled there to hear the greatest actor of the nineteenth, and perhaps of *any* century, Kean! He was waited for, waited for long,—waited for till the impatient but so politely educated public began to think it had waited beyond measure.

“Kean was to play that night his great part of Shylock; his horrible, magnificent, incomparable part. But Kean had not yet come to the theatre, and the Princess Royal was waiting for him.”

We need not tell our readers on this side the Atlantic, that Kean was (as too frequently happened with him) doing homage to the charms of some exquisite Bordeaux, drinking at the Café Anglais, and after still longer waiting, when he was brought to the theatre, he was in a condition in which to any one else the impersonation of any part would have been impossible. He was, however, sobered by the first burst of applause, and became Shylock from head to foot. But it is not with him we have at present to do.

The influence exercised by Shakespeare in France was exercised, as was natural, over the so-called *romantic* school, and we may perhaps astonish our readers, if we, upon mature deliberation, affirm that it was an influence the bad effects of which were immediate, and the good effects indirect. Every language has its own particular and national genius, and none more than the French. But this genius is as much opposed to the genius of Shakespeare, as that of the Germans, for in-

stance, is akin to it. Consequently, while the study of Shakespeare has been the origin of all the literary development of the Anglo-Saxon races for the last sixty or eighty years, it has been pre-eminently the cause of a period of literary perturbation in the modern representatives of the Latin race,—in the French. The *Classiques* of our century in France were a set of narrow-minded, untalented individuals; but the form of their productions was the one suited to the genius of France, only their manipulation of that form was a bad one. In a merely literary point of view, however, let it be remembered that the dramatic works of these doting *Classiques* were not worse, not more inefficient, than the mad ravings of the *Romantics*. The latter mistook Shakespeare altogether, and therefore wholly misapplied him. They, the men of the *new school*, saw, and were chiefly fascinated by, his defects. The jumble of times, places, and characters, which is one of the immortal bard's deficiencies, and which was the result of his education and habits of life, is what charmed most the men who had grown to regard the three unities as a proof of political oppression. The kings of Sicily and Bohemia mixed up in absurd confusion, delighted rhyming boys just let loose from college and from a forced admiration for Racine and the authors of antiquity, and, instead of aiming at or understanding Shakespeare's greatness, they set to work to imitate his bad taste, which was somewhat easier. Had Shakespeare been a Frenchman, he would not probably have invented in the form of Corneille or Molière, and had Molière been enabled to read *Measure for Measure*, or *As You Like It*, he would most assuredly not the less have written the *Misanthrope*. But had Shakespeare been born in France, it is probable he would not have written plays at all. And here we touch upon what we hinted at above, namely, the *indirect* influence of Shakespeare upon France.

The mistake, we repeat, (and herein lies the whole quarrel of the “Romantics” and the “Classics,”) the mistake was the application of Shakespeare to the drama in France. The real, the strong, the undeniable influence of Shakespeare has been a wider one than this; it has been an influence exercised over all thought in general, without reference to a specific

form. It has been an influence over what was highest in France, over her orators, philosophers, historians, and statesmen; but not particularly over her dramatists. On the contrary, it has been less felt by precisely these, because their appreciation of it was a too limited one, and because they sought to bring it principally to bear upon a form which was incapable of harmony with it. Shakespeare has influenced such persons as Guizot and Villemain, as Cousin, Rémusat, Eugène Delacroix, the painter, George Sand (sometimes), Lamartine, and Alfred de Mupet; but he has had no action upon M. Scribe, and the influence he exercised over Hugo, Dumas, and the young dramatic school, as long as they persisted in adapting his form to their own national drama, was disastrous and eminently sterile. From the unintelligent worship of the composition of Shakespeare's plays sprang such monster-births as *Marie Tudor* and *Le Roi s'amuse*, which were anomalies in the national art, totally fruitless, having engendered nothing, and by no means Shakespearian after all. Poor Charles X. would seem to us, although the Romantics complained so bitterly of his tyranny, to have understood this question better than most of those around him, to have judged it from the truly national point of view, and to have manifested an extremely liberal tendency in deciding upon it. When, just before the Revolution of 1830, M. Victor Hugo had had an audience of the King to explain to his Majesty his tragedy entitled *Marion Delorme*, the whole Académie Française and its adherents out of doors were up in arms; and when they heard of *Hernani* as forthcoming, their rage and alarm knew no bounds, and they got up a petition to the throne against the man who was, fifteen years later, to be their colleague.

"Messieurs les Classiques," says Jules Janin, "framed a petition to the King, in the name of the literature, the art, and the good taste of France, alleged to be represented at that particular period of time by Messieurs Alexandre Duval, Chenier, Etienne, Audriant, and Raynouard" (names tolerably consigned since that epoch to oblivion). "To hear them talk—these fanatics—of the *Templiers*, of *Tibère*, of the *Deux Gendres*, and of other works of the same high order,—the stage and the literature of France were at an end, and the noble traditions

of Louis XIV. destroyed, if his Majesty Charles X. allowed all these youngsters to invade the theatre and take the place of older men. This appeal, however, to the might of royalty, this invocation to force, was not to the taste of the generation. To the praise of the King be it said, his Majesty was little touched by this claim laid upon him by veteran poets in behalf of their right to the monopoly of tragedy and comedy, and he cleverly answered, the excellent King! that there was in this world a republic where he could have, like everybody else, but one voice,—the Republic of Letters,—and that, in all questions like the one submitted to him, the public was, after all, the only judge."

Charles X. was doubly right in this reply, inasmuch as he was perfectly aware that the danger from the "new school" was essentially transient, and that, in fact, "French art" would be in no way injured by it. He did quite right in referring the whole matter to the decision of the pit, for, in the end, the *vox populi* pronounced, as was inevitable, against M. Hugo, though Charles X. did not live to see it.

Twenty years have passed since these disputes excited the public mind in France, and now it would be as easy, if not easier, to perform Chenier's *Tiberius* as Hugo's *Hernani*. One is not more obsolete than the other; for if Chenier's drama has become extinct from want of talent, the drama of Hugo has become extinct from its intense opposition to the national spirit and style. In this Doctor Johnson was right, when he declared that "what was strictly in conformity with the national style never became obsolete." Upon Hugo, as upon the rest of his countrymen, Shakespeare has exercised an undoubtedly strong action; but it is upon Hugo as a poet, as a thinker, and not as a dramatist. Had he never read Shakespeare, he might have written better plays; for whereas he combines all the faults of the British bard, without one of his splendors, he might, had he let himself alone and been original, have had some beauties, and have escaped what renders him, upon the French stage, grotesque. Hugo is Shakspearian when he is merely a poet. The *Feuilles d'Automne*, the *Contemplations*, and the *Châtiments* (his best work, if we set aside its perpetual strain of invective), are all the products of a mind that has thought upon and with Shakespeare; whilst

Marion Delorme, *Lucrece Borgia*, and many other of his plays, are mere copies of defects that Shakespeare owed unavoidably and solely to his age.

No one has perceived this more clearly than Jules Janin, who, though from pure liberalism of feeling he encourages Hugo to persevere against all opposition, becomes thoroughly, enthusiastically national and French when the true French and national style takes, once more, possession of the theatre. This is evident the moment Rachel is guessed at; and you then see at once with what a burst of spontaneous and national joy the critic (so exclusively French at heart) hails the appearance of this girl of sixteen, who literally with a touch of her hand, with a glance of her eye, with a tone of her voice, calls from its trance the spirit of the real French drama, and restores it to full and perfect life before an audience enraptured, because composed of Frenchmen.

Rachel was something more than merely a great actress; she was the mark of a turning-point, if we may so term it, in the public taste. The hour of her appearance upon the boards of the Théâtre Français coincides with that at which French taste ceased to approve entirely of disorder and impurity, and once more returned to that admiration of the decent and the refined which had, during the century previous to the Revolution, been one of its marked characteristics. The entire and all but instantaneous success of Rachel is not an event to be lightly regarded, and without esteeming it at its genuine value we should run a risk of only imperfectly appreciating the educated population of France. Her whole career is a protest against the possibility of Anglo-Saxon influence (or, indeed, of any influence save the purely classic) over the French stage. Till she came, it had grown into fashion to say that the tragedy of Racine and Corneille was out of date, and no longer adapted to the intellectual wants of modern times; Roxane, Hermione, Pauline, Phèdre, were restored to life with all the reality, all the passion of modern dictation, and it was found out that they, more than anything else, gave satisfaction to the intellectual wants of France. Perhaps there never was, in fact, a stronger proof that, save some few exterior modifications, the French of 1845–46 were

the French of 1670, and that, after such a social and political earthquake as that of 1793, the race ruled over by Louis Philippe was substantially the same race in its feelings and its tastes as the race ruled over by Louis XIV.

As to comedy, this never had been called in question ; the hesitation was as to the fitness of the tragic authors of the grand *Siècle* ; but Molière, Regnard, Le Sage, and others of their stamp, had never ceased to interest the French public for a day. For this reason, Mlle. Mars really was and remained, to use Janin's expression, "the representative of all the drama of her time" ; for from 1800 to 1837-40 was precisely the period when, *Britannicus* and *Oreste* being made matter for dispute, the *Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe* had the monopoly of the public favor, and subsisted as indisputable and on all hands accepted models. This was one of the causes of the supremacy of Mlle. Mars, a supremacy no one ever doubted. Célimène was the queen of more than a quarter of a century.

"Célimène," as Janin truly observes, "was as though it had been written on purpose for Mlle. Mars. It is the part, above all, of high comedy that she likes the most and plays the best. She has in her all the instincts of the grand old French society, that society which has disappeared long ago, and she is familiar with it from her strong intuitive sense of genius, elegance, and fine taste. Irony, wit, gayety, affability, grace,—everything is contained at once in that part of Célimène, in that fine struggle of the utmost coquetry with the delicacy of an honorable man. Célimène stands all alone, defended by her beauty, and with no protection save her wit. All the loungers of the court are around her. They come to spend hours near this beauty so much in vogue, for the mere purpose of seeing her and of hearing her talk ; she, on her side, only means to show them her beauty and her wit ; as to her heart, she takes it not into account,—it has nothing to do there. What do these exquisite gentlemen care for the heart of Célimène ? They seek only for the *éclat* that the young beauty can give them in society ; they have no care for her affections. Neither one nor the other of them all aspires to exclusive dominion over Célimène ; what all aspire to is a gentle word, *before witnesses*, a tender look, *in public*, a letter they can show to all the world ; as to the rest, that may follow or not. And this is why Célimène, true to the part she has assumed, is so prodigal to all of fair words, of tender looks, of pretty

letters,—there lies her force, and she needs force to defend herself. The history of Célimène is the history of Mlle. Mars with the French public of our age."

This is not only the best portrait of Molière's Célimène that we remember to have met with, and probably the best portrait also of Mlle. Mars; it is the portrait of the French-woman, of the *Parisienne par excellence*,—the reproduction of a type which was for centuries the pivot on which turned nearly all French society. It is for this reason we have thought it so important, and have quoted it entire. From the Duchesse de Chevreuse to Madame de Sévigne, from Madame de Maintenon to the Princesse des Ursins, and from all these down to the Duchesse de Duras of twenty-five years since, and to Madame de Castellane who died almost the other day, there is a spark of Célimène in every French-woman of any influence, of any note. In those who want her elegance you will find her *esprit*, and in those who have not her intelligence you will recognize her charm; in all, you will find her *aplomb* and her indifference of heart. Janin has, in the sketch we have quoted, painted one of the principal figures of French civilization in all times, and he knows it well.

There is more philosophy in Jules Janin than is usually supposed. He is a profound moralist of the school once so popular in England. There is in him a spice of Sterne, of Fielding, sometimes even of Swift, though, in general, satire takes with him the worthier shape of indignation. In his book now lying before us, called *Le Traité de Petits Bonheurs*, there is as much practical philosophy as would suffice to fill a dozen *serious* works; yet it is written in that lively, pleasant tone which is so peculiarly his own, and which induces the more frivolous part of the public to regard him as "not serious" because not heavy. "In troubled times," he exclaims in the first page, "it is meet we should tell men of their happiness"; and the whole object of the work is to show what infinite resources are left to those who choose to draw their felicity from themselves, and who, from living within themselves, learn how to rise superior to circumstances and to their own fortune.

This book is eminently what the French term an "amiable book," and we are in no way astonished at its immense sale. It is a consolatory, a lovable book; naturally, therefore, one that increases a man's self-esteem, by proving to him all that lies within his grasp, if he be minded to make the best of himself and of what is in him. In the opening chapter there is what may be interesting to our readers on this side the Atlantic, the portrait, namely, of the author himself, under the name of M. de Trégeau. As it is an extraordinary likeness, and as the original has occupied for thirty years (having made his *début* at seventeen) a conspicuous place in the journalism of France, it may not be unacceptable to copy at least some of the principal features.

"Our friend," says Janin, alluding to himself under this disguise, "is not poor, neither is he rich; he is no longer young, but he is not old; he has not said farewell to all the charms of the bright earlier years, but he no longer sings the soft strain of *Lydia, dormis*.

"On such a day, at such an hour, in a bright sunshine, when all is full of life around him, our friend is in the summer of existence, and assuredly counts no more than thirty years. But on the morrow, if the day be dark and the birds silent, he dreams within himself and is sad. He is strange, this man, who is, as it were, two men placed between youth and age, between enthusiasm and negation, between love and — the *gout*! For he is gouty, yet falls in love. He is a poet, a philosopher, a musician. He is the echo of the past, the voice of the present hour. He is a philosopher, for he has left behind (after having tried them all) the vanities of our terrestrial sphere,—above all, the vanity of renown. He was already disposed for happiness. Kind, not from weakness, but from kindness first, and next from sheer laziness, and because to be a *bad man* a vast deal of ability and strength and perseverance is required. All his life he attended to all good advice in order not to annoy him who gave it, and never followed it in order not to annoy him who listened to it. He is veracious from love of truth, but also to escape the difficulties of lying. Dependent upon no one, no one was dependent upon him. And in the midst of all his crowd of small happinesses, so easy to preserve and to overlook, he had the one thing which, of all others, enabled him to appreciate them most,—he had the *gout*! Yes! the genuine *gout*, one abominable month in six; and when he was pitied by his friends, he would cry out, with a resolute

laugh, ‘Well, yes! *mes amis!* I have it; but if I have the honor to be gouty, it is because I have richly deserved it.’”

The whole book is in this strain, and is the history of the little treasures of contentment that M. de Trégeau finds in life, ending with these charming words:—

“O Providence! there are in this world no *small* happinesses, for the more happiness is hidden, and the easier it is to hide, the better; and therefore, friend, the truth is, that thy ‘little’ is in fact a great happiness.”

We should recommend the translation of this charming work on our side of the Atlantic; for it has a stronger savor of the Anglo-Saxon and domestic, than of the pure Gallic element. It is an honest and sympathetic, and we would say eminently a *happy* book.

From the famous theatrical critic of the *Journal des Débats* to the most famous of all theatrical directors in France, Dr. Véron, the transition is easy. Dr. Véron’s last book, *Quatre Ans de Règne, où en Sommes Nous*, is not a success, quite the reverse; but it is an *incident*, and a remarkable one. Dr. Véron, it must be remembered, when he took to writing and signing what he wrote in the *Constitutionnel*, did so, manifestly, in order to support the Presidential, and, later, the Imperialist cause. He abandoned all his former friends who belonged more or less to the liberal, royalist, and constitutional parties, to give his vote undisguisedly, loudly, in favor of absolute government and of Bonapartism. He had been the intimate friend of Changarnier on the eve of the *coup d'état*; on its morrow, he deemed it fitting and proper that Changarnier should be a prisoner and an exile, and that the rights and liberties of every French citizen should be subject to the arbitrary will and pleasure of one man at the head of the state. All the obloquy and all the recompense that were showered upon the Doctor, on either side, were for the reason that he was a Bonapartist. It was for that cause that he both merited and suffered, with that cause, therefore, that he ought to be identified. Taken from this point of view, his volume just published is undoubtedly curious; for it admits what hitherto the enemies only of the existing *régime* are supposed to have pro-

claimed. It admits, and seems written for the sole purpose of admitting, that liberty is wholly absent from the existing order of things in France, and that its want is a positive danger.

In the book itself there is nothing eloquent, nothing new, nothing that any one can desire to copy or to retain; nothing, in short, save the fact of the curiosity of such a book's being written by such a man. It is Dr. Véron's enemies more than his friends who have shown that the work was not insignificant; for whilst those whose political opinions may be flattered by the doctrine it sets forth remain silent, and do not risk themselves in its praise, those whom its political doctrines offend are open-mouthed in its abuse, and scarcely let a day pass without pelting its author with the dirt they pick up from the bottom of their inkstands. The only journal that has attempted to say a good word for Dr. Véron is the journal least likely of all to have undertaken what might look like his defence, namely, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the most exclusive, most disdainful, and least given of all to any acts of good-fellowship. The *Revue des Deux Mondes*, however, has had cause latterly to wish there were a somewhat larger portion of liberty accorded to the citizens of France, and so far M. Véron's arguments were also its own. Moreover, the direction of the *Revue* has been exposed latterly to the same wordy abuse with the burly Doctor, and consequently the men composing that "direction" have been somewhat disposed to feel tenderly towards him, and to support him. There is no doubt, however, that *Quatre Ans de Règne* is a sign of the times, and as such is decidedly not without importance. Four years—or even two years—ago, Dr. Véron would not have written this book, nor, if written, would he have been allowed to publish and sell it. Now, not only are the opinions and sentiments expressed in it those which must unavoidably be the sentiments and opinions of all reasonable persons, but they are such as the government dares not take upon itself to suppress. But it may therefore be argued, that the imperial government is itself persuaded that the hour is approaching when the political freedom it promised as "the crowning portion of the edifice of the state," will become not only possible, but

necessary. It may be said, that, by suggesting the opportunity of liberty, Dr. Véron may be far from running counter to the wishes of his patrons, but may be, on the contrary, promoting them. The answer is an easy one : it lies in what we alluded to above. There is not a ministerial paper, be it high or low in the scale of journalism, so it be but a government organ, that has not done its best to demolish Dr. Véron, and from the *Constitutionnel* down to the *Figaro* (a vile print, in which every slander, however hideous, finds its home), the name of the ex-director of the opera is held up as a sort of target for the shafts of government scribes.

Dr. Véron's book is not only one of the first in which political freedom and "parliamentary liberty" are distinctly asked for, in which the restraint upon them is pointed out as excessive and as a positive peril ; it is also the first in which the persons occupying the various offices of government have their *past* and their *present* set down by the side of their names, and in no very flattering terms, though with no expression of personally disagreeable censure. If Dr. Véron's book had been what is called "full of talent," it would decidedly have been an "event"; as it is, we have said, it is an "incident," and we have designated why.

A personal question attaches also to the volumes of Marshal Marmont's *Mémoires*, and it may not be uninteresting to American readers to know how their publication was found to be possible, and was brought about. When the Marshal wrote them, he had a duplicate copy made, and deposited in safe hands in Austria, so that Madame de Damremont, to whom he left them in Paris, had in fact in her possession only a manuscript whose correctness it was at any moment practicable to verify. The Duc de Raguse died in 1852, and the *Mémoires* were not disposed of till 1856. The various publishers who were applied to refused to pay the sums required, saying that, under the present government, the public would never believe in the veracity of memoirs purposing to treat of the first empire. In the end, and for this reason, the manuscript was sold at something like a tenth of the price it had been supposed it would bring. It was also found impossible to publish the work without the Emperor's

having seen the manuscript. It was accordingly submitted to him, and fifty times in the course of its perusal, his Majesty signified that it was not to be thought of that such memoirs should be given out to the world, and that their publication was decidedly to be forbidden. It is certain that during the entire first five volumes the impression given by Marshal Marmont is all but totally unfavorable to the period of the Consulate and the Empire, and the judgment of this very foremost of his captains upon the man who made him whatever he became was as harsh, upon the whole, as could well be imagined. But those who surrounded the present Emperor begged him to wait, saying : "Your Majesty will see that the Bourbons and the period of the Restoration are treated so severely that nothing more could be wished for in the interests of Bonapartism ; and by what goes before, the Marshal's impartiality and credibility will be established, and your Majesty's enemies put in their proper place." Thus adjured, the Emperor read on, and soon read enough to convince himself that his advisers were perfectly right, and the *Mémoires* were allowed to be published.

Perhaps, to appreciate this work at its real value, the character of the late Due de Raguse ought to be taken into consideration. This was eminently a *depreciatory* character, and to his last hour there was nothing more natural to Marmont, than to oppose drawbacks to every portion of praise that was awarded to no matter whom, for no matter what. No man would have been more quickly tired of hearing Aristides perpetually called "the just," and Bonaparte's glory and fame were not, we are disposed to think, a title to Marmont's sympathy or unqualified admiration. Still, of his impartiality of censure there can be no doubt. He blames the mistakes of the Empire, but he blames bitterly the shortcomings of the Restoration also, and does not scruple, in the volume of his *Mémoires* that has just appeared (and which leads the reader to 1814), to say, that, whilst the faults of the period that had preceded were great and deplorable, they were the faults of a time and of men full of force, energy, and enterprise, the faults of ambition and over-daring, whereas the faults of the period that followed were those of a dishonest, degenerate,

weakling age. That such a sweeping accusation should be brought by the Duc de Raguse against the Restoration astonishes us from its flagrant injustice; but it is explicable from the Marshal's dislike to a parliamentary form of government. Marmont was essentially an *absolutist*, and therefore incapable of comprehending Louis XVIII. In the next forthcoming volumes will be seen his appreciation of the most really constitutional epoch of French history,—of the only period of time during which representative government was genuinely practised in France; but we do not anticipate that it has met with a chronicler able or inclined to do it justice. In the six volumes already published the reader will find an admirable account of the Italian, and, above all, of the Egyptian, campaign, and we hold ourselves authorized to affirm (the contrary of what has been very generally supposed) that the entire authenticity of the *Mémoires* lies beyond a doubt.

- ART. XIII.—1. *Margaret: a Tale of the Real and the Ideal, Blight and Bloom; including Sketches of a Place not before described, called Mons Christi.* In two volumes. Revised Edition. By the Author of “Philo,” “Richard Edney,” &c. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, & Co. 1851.
2. *Compositions in Outline, by FELIX O. C. DARLEY from JUDD’s Margaret.* Engraved by KONRAD HUBER. New York: Redfield. 1856.

JUDD’s Margaret has for years been familiar to our eyes, and no stranger to our pages. For this very reason we confess our greater surprise and joy at the appearance of Darley’s Outlines. The highest pleasure is not in absolute novelty, but in the union of things new and old, as when we meet old friends under new circumstances, if not with a new face. Surely the artist has given a new face to the beautiful creations of the novelist, and the exquisite outline of Margaret